

Channing Thaxter

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Town of Canton,

April 3, A. D. 1854.

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CANTON:
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R E P O R T.

In submitting their Report your Committee would state at the outset that one of them, Mr. Dutton, left town in the latter part of November last. The remaining members of the Superintending Committee, in performing the extra duties thus devolving upon them, have, as they trust, been duly impressed with the responsibility of their position.

In reviewing the condition of the schools the past year, we are happy to say that while but comparatively little has occurred which awakens regret, there is much that gives us pleasure. It has been a year of quiet prosperity. No unpleasant occurrences, no acts of insubordination, requiring the interposition of the Committee, have come to their notice. Instances there have been when the attendance of the scholars at school was lessened by sickness; but no more interruptions of this kind have occurred than usual. To state in a single sentence our opinion of the schools, we would say that taking them as a whole, or separately, they will not suffer by a comparison with former years. We think there has been a decided gain.

While the scholars are one year older, it is our belief, that, with few exceptions, they have made corresponding advancement in their studies. But we would not content ourselves by making these general statements. Allow us to be more specific, and to state some of the particulars in respect to which we have desired to witness progress in the schools.

In the branch of Orthography,—the practice of spelling, or writing words correctly,—we have aimed at a higher standard, deeming it essential to a good education. Besides the common method of spelling the words with the lips, we have recommended that of writing them on paper, the slate and the blackboard.

Reading is another branch to which particular attention has been paid, as deserving on the part of the teacher and scholar the most assiduous, earnest culture. In so doing we are persuaded we have your sanction. For what parent does not wish his child not only to understand the rules of reading, but to be able to put them in practice, to articulate every syllable and word distinctly, to observe the pauses, to

lay the emphasis aright, to give the natural variations of voice, so that the meaning of what is read may be easily understood? The art of reading well is not only a valuable accomplishment, but it is a stepping-stone to knowledge. If our youth acquire it, they are in possession of a key which will give them access to intellectual treasures. They have that which will exert upon themselves a refining, ennobling influence, and be a source of profit to others.

Thoroughness of scholarship is a third particular which your Committee have sought to promote. Our feeling is, that mental discipline,—the true end of education,—must be acquired, at least to some extent, in the school-room; and that the course of studies marked out,—Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, History, Physiology, together with the practice of Penmanship,—*if thoroughly mastered*, will secure this important result.

While there is a difference in the natural capacities of our youth, yet in our visits to the schools the idea has been advanced again and again, that, if diligent and persevering, they may all be thorough scholars in the various branches of study. We have told them that they will be hereafter in society very much what they make themselves. That even the youth whose intellect is not so strong, if he is faithful in his lessons, will in the end go beyond the bright one who is careless and idle. We have said that if they satisfy themselves with a low standard of scholarship, they will feel the inconvenience painfully at a future day.

As falling within the province of your Committee, we have, as time and opportunity permitted, spoken to the scholars on the subject of behaviour, decorous conduct; that they should avoid not only what would be a violation of the laws of the school-room, but a breach of good manners in their intercourse with each other elsewhere. We have spoken on this point not only for their own sake, as calculated to secure their success as scholars, and their usefulness hereafter as citizens of the State, but for the good of society at large. Every year and indeed every month we are reminded from what is transpiring in our cities of the evils of an undisciplined youth.

The complaint is waxing louder and louder that the *manners* of the young are not receiving that attention, that culture which are bestowed on their minds. Your Committee are more and more convinced that the habit of obedience to rightful authority is the foundation stone in the character of a good boy. In their opinion it is owing to a somewhat prevailing laxness in this respect, that there is at this day such a fearful amount of juvenile immorality and crime.

Such are the more prominent points, as falling within the province of

our duty, to which your Committee have the past year given particular attention.

How far these ends have been secured, you will be able in some measure to ascertain when we come to speak of the schools.

Allow us here to say a few words respecting the character and qualifications of teachers. Aware of the evils resulting from introducing incompetent teachers into our schools, your Committee have been careful in respect to the persons approbated. We have tested their attainments in spelling, reading, penmanship, and in all the branches required by the statutes to be taught.

Knowing that nothing is so essential to a good school as proper government, that a school without order is worse than nothing, that, if there is not subordination there will be not only no learning, but much positive evil, we have examined every new candidate with reference to his or her capacity as a disciplinarian. It is not enough that a teacher can pass the ordeal of the examination on the prescribed studies. A tact for government and for stimulating the minds of the scholars must be possessed, also that kindness of manner and disposition which will gain the confidence and love of the school. Such teachers, and only such, it has been our intention to approbate. Whether we have succeeded in obtaining them is a point we would submit to the judgment of the respective districts. Your Committee cannot, however, refrain from saying that in their opinion the town has been, the past year, favored with a company of well-qualified teachers.

The amount of money raised by the Town for schools, was	\$2,500 00
Interest of Massachusetts School Fund,	136 51
Amount raised by voluntary contribution in District No. 7,	99 00
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	\$2,735 51

Average wages paid to male teachers per month, including board—Winter,	\$40 49
Summer,	43 76

Average wages paid to female teachers per month, including board—Winter,	\$16 62
Summer,	18 43

Whole number of scholars in all the schools in Summer,	564
Average attendance,	426
Whole number of scholars in all the schools in Winter,	545
Average attendance,	413

DISTRICT No. 1.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	66
Amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$272 82

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, ASA SHEPARD. Teacher, Miss MARIA TUCKER. Length of school 4 months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20; whole number of scholars registered, 49; average attendance, $39\frac{9}{10}$; number under 5 years of age, 5; number over 15 years of age, none.

The Committee much regretted that owing to a mistake in giving the notice, they were not informed of the time of the examination of the school. None of them were therefore present. Those qualified to judge, who were present, reported that the appearance of the school was satisfactory.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, A. F. HYLAND. Length of school, 4 months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$35; whole number of scholars, 56; average attendance, $36\frac{1}{4}$; number under 5 years of age, 2; number over 15 years of age, 3.

We need only remark that from several visits paid to this school during the term, and a somewhat particular examination at the close, we were satisfied the scholars had made commendable progress in study under Mr. Hyland. A large number were in attendance at the examination.

DISTRICT No. 2.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	48
Amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$222 96

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, GEO. F. H. HORTON. Teacher, Miss AUGUSTA W. MULLIKIN. Length of school, $4\frac{1}{4}$ months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$18; whole number of scholars, 46; average attendance, 34; number under 5 years of age, 2; over 15 years of age, none.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss AUGUSTA W. MULLIKIN. Length of school, $4\frac{1}{4}$ months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$23; whole number of scholars, 45; average attendance, 38; number under 5 years of age, 1; over 15 years of age, 2.

This school was under the instruction of the same teacher during the Summer and Winter Terms. Possessing a strong mind, a comprehensive and mature education, a good amount of energy and perseverance, Miss Mullikin has carried her scholars forward, step by step, in the path of knowledge. The influence of such a teacher is calculated to lead her pupils to aspire to a high standard as scholars. Her services for the year to come may well be sought by this or any other district. This school has with commendable ability sustained a semi-monthly paper, "The Monitor." With the reading of several of its numbers your Committee were favored. The winter examination was one of interest.

DISTRICT No. 3.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	248
Amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$956 96

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, EDGAR W. BRAY. Teacher, Miss MARTHA CLARK. Length of school, $6\frac{1}{2}$ months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$14 ; whole number of scholars, 99 ; average attendance, 73. Number under 5 years of age, 12.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Miss SARAH C. MESSINGER. Length of school, $6\frac{3}{4}$ months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20 ; whole number of scholars, 75 ; average attendance, 62.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. W. L. P. BOARDMAN. Length of school 7 months ; wages of teacher, including board, $\$45\frac{4}{100}$ per month ; whole number of scholars, 56 ; average attendance, $45\frac{2}{5}$; number over 15 years of age, 6.

These three schools, the Grammar, the Intermediate and the Primary Departments were divided into two terms, which we call the Summer Term.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss MARTHA CLARK. Length of school, $3\frac{3}{4}$ months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$14 ; whole number of scholars, 80 ; average attendance, 57 ; number under 5 years of age, 7.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.

Teacher, Miss SARAH C. MESSINGER. Length of school, 4 months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20 ; whole number of scholars, 72 ; average attendance, 60.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.

Teacher, Mr. W. L. P. BOARDMAN. Length of school, 4 months ; wages of teacher, \$500 per annum ; whole number of scholars, 63 ; average attendance, 53 $\frac{1}{4}$; number over 15 years of age, 13.

Highly favored has this district been the past year, as in former years, in having teachers fitted to their respective departments ; teachers who have done their work faithfully and well. In respect to their intellectual qualifications, their tact in governing, their ability to impart instruction as well as the prosperity, the high stand of these several schools, your Committee speak what we do know and testify what we have seen.

The Primary Department, a large and difficult school, has been well managed ; its teacher has obtained a strong hold on the affections of her young pupils. Miss Clark possesses, in an eminent degree, those peculiar qualities which are requisite in a teacher of a primary school. And we cannot but hope that her services will continue to be enjoyed by this district. We would also suggest that a sub-division of this school be made soon.

The Intermediate Department is a model school. It is managed by one whose career as a teacher has been marked with ability and success. On leaving the Primary Department for a school of a higher grade, our youth could come under the care of no better teacher than Miss Messinger. The exercises of this school move on with clock-work regularity. Long may this district be favored with the instructions of Miss Messinger.

The Grammar Department is an ornament to our village. We consider it inferior to no school of the kind within the circle of our acquaintance.

The recent examination, in the presence of numerous spectators, evinced the sterling qualifications, the happy tact of Mr. Boardman as a teacher. Every class acquitted itself honorably. There was no attempt at display. Nothing to catch the wonder of the unthinking. It gave us pleasure to see how promptly and understandingly the true answer was given to the various questions asked. The specimens of penmanship were of a high order. Your Committee have uniformly witnessed under Mr. Boardman evidence that as an instructor he is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

Under these three teachers, therefore, it cannot be otherwise than that

the schools of District No. 3, in taking possession of their new, commodious, elegant school-house the approaching term, are to enjoy increasing prosperity.

DISTRICT No. 4.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	33
Whole amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$181 41

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, JEDEDIAH TUCKER. Teacher, Miss JULIETTE DICKERMAN. Length of school, 4 months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$15 ; whole number of scholars, 28 ; average attendance, 20 ; number under 5 years of age, 6 ; over 15 years of age, none.

This school was characterized by good order, a steady attendance on the part of the scholars generally, and a fair amount of improvement. The school contains some scholars of more than usual promise.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss JULIA M. TILDEN. Length of school, 4 months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20 ; whole number of scholars, 31 ; average attendance, 20 ; number under 5 years of age, 4 ; over 15 years of age, 2.

This was Miss Tilden's first school, and we are happy to add, she has made a successful and promising beginning. It is hoped her labors will be continued in this school the year to come. Judging from the number present at the close, both of the Summer and Winter Term, your Committee think that the parents of the district generally feel a growing interest in the prosperity of their school.

DISTRICT No. 5.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	65
Amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$270 11

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, FRANKLIN REED. Teacher, Miss M. J. DICKERMAN. Length of school, $6\frac{1}{2}$ months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$22 ; whole number of scholars, 63+ ; average attendance, 38 ; number under 5 years of age, 5 ; number over 15 years of age, 2.

The particular features of this school which interested your Committee at repeated visits and on the day of examination, were good govern-

ment, thoroughness of instruction, and industry on the part of the scholars. It was evidently their feeling that they came to school to work and not to be idle, to get perfect lessons instead of those but half committed. Among the many benefits realized by this school, an important one is the formation of a patient, persevering habit of study on the part of the scholars generally.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, GEORGE H. DICKERMAN. Length of school, 11 weeks; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$36; whole number of scholars, 51; average attendance, $41\frac{1}{11}$; number under 5 years of age, 3; over 15 years of age, 1.

It may be said of this school during the year, it commenced, continued, and ended well. The same system of instruction introduced in the Summer, was with a good measure of success continued through the Winter Term. The specimens of penmanship indicated unusual care on the part of both teacher and scholar. We consider Mr. Dickerman a very efficient teacher.

DISTRICT No. 6.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	81
Whole amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$336 87

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, ABEL FARRINGTON. Teacher, Miss ROSE SPENCER. Length of school, $4\frac{3}{4}$ months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20; whole number of scholars, 70; average attendance, $42\frac{1}{2}$; number under 5 years of age, 7; number over 15 years of age, none.

This school having occupied for a few weeks the chapel, on the 27th of June took possession of their school-house, much enlarged and beautified by the hand of improvement. Possessing an amiable disposition and gentle manners, Miss Spencer won the esteem of her pupils, and by her conscientious discharge of duty as a teacher, secured the respect of the district.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, MR. THOMAS B. BROWN. Assistant Teacher, Miss MARY SAUNDERS. Length of school, 5 months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$42; wages of assistant teacher per month, \$12; whole number of scholars, 70; average attendance, 50; number under 5 years of age, 2; number over 15 years of age, 4.

The liberal policy of this district the past year in rendering their school-house more commodious, and in furnishing an assistant teacher for the Winter Term, has resulted, as we anticipated, in stimulating the minds of the scholars. "They that sow bountifully shall reap bountifully." The prosperity of the school the past few weeks has been interrupted by sickness, which has much lessened the daily attendance. Nor would we omit to mention the loss this school has experienced in the death of a bright, promising pupil.

Possessing excellent natural abilities as well as a superior education, at home in the school-room, Mr. Brown has done his work thoroughly. To train his pupils to remember, to think, to analyze and to comprehend, seemed to be his object.

The younger scholars, under the instruction of Miss Saunders, have made decided improvement. The district was largely represented at the examination. The compositions which were read and the problems which were demonstrated on the blackboard on the day of the closing examination, gave evidence of thorough instruction on the part of the teacher and proficiency on the part of the pupils.

DISTRICT No. 7.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15,	94
Whole amount of money appropriated to the District,	\$395 38
Contributed by the District,	99 00

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, TIMOTHY KALEY. Teacher, Mr. ERASTUS BROWN. Length of school, $3\frac{3}{4}$ months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$42; whole number of scholars, 78; average attendance, $57\frac{3}{7}$; number under 5 years of age, 5; over 15 years of age, 3.

WINTER TERM.

Prudential Committee, ALBERT W. MAKEPEACE. Teacher, Mr. ERASTUS BROWN. Assistant Teacher, Miss H. F. LEAVITT. Length of school, $3\frac{1}{2}$ months; wages of teachers per month, including board, Mr. Brown, \$44—Miss Leavitt, \$14; whole number of scholars, 77; average attendance, $59\frac{1}{10}$; number of scholars under 5 years of age, none; number over 15 years of age, 2.

Though this school comes last on the list, it does not stand last as to character and condition. Mr. Brown, who has had the charge of the school summer and winter, excels in his profession. As evidence, we refer to the manner of his instruction, the ripe and solid fruits of his

labors, the order and stillness of the school, the close application, and the marked attainments of the pupils. Much might be said as to the merits of this teacher and the excellent condition in which he left the school. His services in the line of teaching would be valuable in any district.

Mr. Brown was aided by Miss H. F. Leavitt, who performed the duties of her department to the satisfaction of your Committee.

DISTRICT No. 7. WINTER TERM CONTINUED.

Teacher, Miss H. F. LEAVITT, assisted by Miss SARAH J. MANSFIELD. Wages of teacher per month, including board, \$16; wages of assistant teacher per month, \$14; whole number of scholars, 56; average attendance, 40; number of scholars over 15 years of age, 2.

The school, though subject to interruption in consequence of the prevalence of an epidemic, made a moderate degree of improvement. The teachers were both from the district, and but recently pupils in the school.

Enlightened and practical views on the subject of education exist in the minds of the district generally. Manifesting a commendable zeal, a voluntary contribution of ninety-nine dollars was raised by citizens of the district, adding ten weeks to the Winter Term.

In closing our report, we cannot refrain from congratulating the people of the town on the growing evidence presented among us of the prosperity of the cause of education. A large outlay has been made the past year by one District, No. 6, upon their school-house. In the room of a contracted building, they have now an inviting, commodious school apartment.

A noble structure has also been completed in District No. 3. When we consider the use to which this fine building is to be put, the influence it is destined to exert in promoting the intelligence, the virtuous sentiments of hundreds and probably many thousands of youth, the good effect it may have in elevating the tone and standard of education through the town, we feel that it has been a wise investment. One that will yield returns better, more enduring, than gold or silver.

SOLOMON CLARK, } *School Committee*
SAMUEL B. NOYES, } *of Canton.*